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Building Evacuation Update 12-03-2021

On Thursday December 2nd, the City of Waukesha Fire Department, together with city officials, took lifesaving action to protect the health and safety of the residents of the Horizon West Condominium building located in the 300 block of N. West Avenue in Waukesha.

As a result of recent inspections conducted by multiple inspectors, and in accordance with Chapter 17 of the Municipal Code, the city's Chief Building Inspector found the condominium building to be unfit for human occupancy effective immediately Thursday afternoon. After learning of the gravity of multiple structural violations, Waukesha Fire Chief Steve Howard, together with city leaders, deemed it imperative to immediately evacuate the residents.

Following is a brief history of the City of Waukesha's interactions with the Horizon West Condominium Association:

- In June of 2020 the City of Waukesha received a complaint about the conditions of the balconies at the Horizon West Condominiums and ordered the balconies to not be used by residents. Additionally, the city ordered the structural issues with the balconies be remedied, as well as ordered the owner to conduct an engineering analysis and provide it to the City.
- There were additional inspections throughout 2020 and 2021 by the City of Waukesha Fire Department as the condominium association attempted to hire contractors and rectify the issues at the building.
- On September 21, 2021 the City ordered fencing installed around the building due to the worsening condition of the balconies and falling debris was dropping from the structures.
- In October 2021, the Horizon West Condominium Association began removing the balconies.
- Removal of the balconies revealed deficiencies of the structural frame of the building as well as the structural columns. Additional inspections occurred by the Fire Department and the City's third party independent structural engineer, and the engineer for the building throughout November.



- On Tuesday, November 30, a preliminary structural report by an independent structural engineer revealed deficiencies in the load-bearing structure of the building. The City began discussions on appropriate next steps.
- Upon additional site visits and analysis by the City, building engineer and independent structural engineer, the City received additional data late afternoon on Thursday December 2 which led to the conclusion that the building was unsafe to remain occupied. The City activated its Emergency Operation Center and oversaw the evacuation throughout the evening of December 2.
- As of Friday morning, December 3, residents have been successfully evacuated and the building is now secured.
 - 65 total individuals were successfully evacuated from the building.
 - 23 rooms were provided by the Salvation Army for temporary housing.
- This morning, the city in conjunction with all parties have reviewed a proposed plan to provide immediate temporary shoring and support to stabilize the structure in order to mitigate any imminent structural collapse.
- As of 12 noon today condo owner contractors have installed structural shoring on the building to provide some immediate structural integrity.

Fire Chief Steve Howard and City Administrator Kevin Lahner will be hosting a press availability 2:30 pm to 3 pm today at Fire Station #1, 130 West St. Paul Avenue in Waukesha.

For Immediate Release

Contact: Kevin Lahner, City Administrator
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December 2, 2021

Waukesha Fire Department Orders Horizon West Condominium Building Evacuated

WAUKESHA, WI – By order of Waukesha Fire Chief Steve Howard, the Horizon West Condominium Building at 315 N. West Avenue in the City of Waukesha has been ordered evacuated tonight due to structural conditions at the building. According to an independent structural engineering report, the building is at an imminent threat of collapse due to compromised conditions of existing structural columns. The moment we became aware of these issues we put the evacuation plan in place.

The building consists of 48 units and all families are currently being evacuated by police and fire personnel. The City is working with the Salvation Army of Waukesha to assist families with immediate housing needs.

Due to the possible collapse zone, the properties at 323 N. West Avenue and 307 N. West Avenue are also being evacuated.

We understand the impact this has the families that are being affected by this decision, but the public safety is of the utmost importance.

Our primary focus this evening is on the immediate life safety issues, this is a very fluid situation as such we will not be providing press interviews tonight. We will notify you of the time and location any press conferences via social media.

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